

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

JUAN TONY FLORES, ) Case No.: 1:20-cv-0701- JLT  
Plaintiff, )  
v. ) ORDER GRANTING PLAINTIFF'S MOTION  
ANDREW SAUL, ) TO PROCEED IN FORMA PAUPERIS  
Commissioner of Social Security, )  
Defendant. ) (Doc. 2)  
\_\_\_\_\_  
)

Juan Tony Flores seeks to proceed *in forma pauperis* with an action for judicial review of the administrative decision denying Social Security benefits. Pending before the Court are the complaint and the motion to proceed *in forma pauperis*. (Docs. 1, 2) For the following reasons, the Court finds issuance of the new case documents is appropriate.

**I. Proceeding *in forma pauperis***

The Court may authorize the commencement of an action without prepayment of fees “by a person who submits an affidavit that includes a statement of all assets such person . . . possesses [and] that the person is unable to pay such fees or give security therefor.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a). The Court reviewed the financial status affidavit (Doc. 2), and finds the requirements of 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a) are satisfied. Therefore, Plaintiff’s request to proceed *in forma pauperis* is **GRANTED**.

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1       **II. Screening Requirement**

2           When an individual seeks to proceed *in forma pauperis*, the Court is required to review the  
3 complaint and shall dismiss a complaint, or portion of the complaint, if it is “frivolous, malicious or  
4 fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted; or . . . seeks monetary relief from a defendant  
5 who is immune from such relief.” 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(b); 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2). A plaintiff’s claim is  
6 frivolous “when the facts alleged rise to the level of the irrational or the wholly incredible, whether or  
7 not there are judicially noticeable facts available to contradict them.” *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S.  
8 25, 32-33 (1992).

9       **III. Pleading Standards**

10          General rules for pleading complaints are governed by the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. A  
11 pleading must include a statement affirming the court’s jurisdiction, “a short and plain statement of the  
12 claim showing the pleader is entitled to relief; and . . . a demand for the relief sought, which may  
13 include relief in the alternative or different types of relief.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 8(a). The purpose of the  
14 complaint is to give the defendant fair notice of the claims, and the grounds upon which the complaint  
15 stands. *Swierkiewicz v. Sorema N.A.*, 534 U.S. 506, 512 (2002). The Supreme Court noted,

16           Rule 8 does not require detailed factual allegations, but it demands more than an  
17 unadorned, the-defendant-unlawfully-harmed-me accusation. A pleading that offers  
18 labels and conclusions or a formulaic recitation of the elements of a cause of action will  
not do. Nor does a complaint suffice if it tenders naked assertions devoid of further  
factual enhancement.

19          *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted). Vague  
20 and conclusory allegations do not support a cause of action. *Ivey v. Board of Regents*, 673 F.2d 266,  
21 268 (9th Cir. 1982). The Court clarified further,

22           [A] complaint must contain sufficient factual matter, accepted as true, to “state a claim  
23 to relief that is plausible on its face.” [Citation]. A claim has facial plausibility when  
the plaintiff pleads factual content that allows the court to draw the reasonable  
inference that the defendant is liable for the misconduct alleged. [Citation]. The  
plausibility standard is not akin to a “probability requirement,” but it asks for more than  
a sheer possibility that a defendant has acted unlawfully. [Citation]. Where a complaint  
pleads facts that are “merely consistent with” a defendant’s liability, it “stops short of  
the line between possibility and plausibility of ‘entitlement to relief.’

27          *Iqbal*, 556 U.S. at 679 (citations omitted). When factual allegations are well-pled, a court should  
28 assume their truth and determine whether the facts would make the plaintiff entitled to relief; legal

1 conclusions are not entitled to the same assumption of truth. *Id.* The Court may grant leave to amend a  
2 complaint to the extent deficiencies of the complaint can be cured by an amendment. *Lopez v. Smith*,  
3 203 F.3d 1122, 1127-28 (9th Cir. 2000) (en banc).

4 **IV. Discussion and Analysis**

5 Plaintiff seeks review of a decision by the Commissioner of Social Security denying disability  
6 benefits. (Doc. 1) The Court may have jurisdiction pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 405(g), which provides:

7 Any individual, after any final decision of the Commissioner made after a hearing to  
8 which he was a party, irrespective of the amount in controversy, may obtain a review of  
9 such decision by a civil action commenced within sixty days after the mailing to him of  
10 such decision or within such further time as the Commissioner may allow. Such action  
11 shall be brought in the district court of the United States for the judicial district in  
which the plaintiff resides, or has his principal place of business . . . The court shall  
have power to enter, upon the pleadings and transcript of the record, a judgment  
affirming, modifying, or reversing the decision of the Commissioner of Social Security,  
with or without remanding the cause for a rehearing.

12 *Id.* Except as provided by statute, “[n]o findings of fact or decision of the Commissioner shall be  
13 reviewed by any person, tribunal, or governmental agency.” 42 U.S.C. § 405(h).

14 Plaintiff asserts the Appeals Council issued a notice denying his request for review of the  
15 ALJ’s decision on March 27, 2020. (Doc. 1 at 1) Thus, the complaint was to be filed within sixty-five  
16 days, or no later than May 31, 2020. Because Plaintiff initiated this action by filing a complaint prior  
17 to that date, the request for judicial review was timely under 42 U.S.C. § 405(g).

18 **V. Conclusion and Order**

19 Plaintiff’s complaint states a cognizable claim for review of the administrative decision denying  
20 Social Security benefits. Based upon the foregoing, the Court **ORDERS**:

21 1. Plaintiff’s motion to proceed *in forma pauperis* (Doc. 2) is **GRANTED**;  
22 2. Because the case is STAYED by General Order 615, no summons will issue at this time.

23 Once the stay is lifted, the case will proceed at that time.

24  
25 IT IS SO ORDERED.

26 Dated: May 20, 2020

27 /s/ Jennifer L. Thurston  
28 UNITED STATES MAGISTRATE JUDGE